



**International
Republican Institute**

Suite 700
1225 Eye St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 408-9450
(202) 408-9462 FAX
Web site: www.iri.org

CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: January-March 2005
MEXICO: MORE RESPONSIVE MEXICAN POLITICAL PARTIES
USAID Cooperative Agreement Number: 523-A-00-04-00063-00
Project Dates: October 1, 2004 – September 30, 2007
Total Budget: \$872,500 (\$372,500 obligated for FY '05)
Expenses to date: \$92,305

I. SUMMARY

IRI is implementing a comprehensive and targeted program for each of Mexico's three major political parties at the national, state and local levels and the minor political parties (PVEM, PT and Convergencia), as warrants. Program participants include elected officials, political party members (including the youth secretariats), and government staff and administrators. IRI will also work with Mexican civil society groups and local media, in coordination with events directed at the Mexican political parties. In developing its work plans, IRI coordinates closely with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and other international organizations, including the Organization of American States, the Woodrow Wilson International Center, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Management Systems International (MSI) to ensure that program activities have maximum impact and avoid duplication of efforts.

II. BACKGROUND

Mexico's political parties continue to undergo a process of dynamic change that began three decades ago and culminated with the election of PAN presidential candidate Vicente Fox in the year 2000. That election, which ended a 71-year one-party rule by the PRI, introduced a new democratic competitiveness into Mexican politics. As USAID/Mexico has noted, "the main challenge to Mexican democracy in the next five to ten years is to harness the best of a competitive political system and to enable government to meet the country's complex social, economic, and political needs."

In the absence of PRI hegemony, candidates from the three major parties (PRI, PAN and PRD) and several smaller parties compete for votes in transparent elections at the national, state and local level. This new competitive political system has given the

parties greater incentive to develop skills for communicating with, and responding to, Mexican voters and constituents. However, Mexican political parties are centralized, insular and detached from the citizenry. Discussions and initiatives related to reform are present, in varying degrees, within each of the Mexican political parties, but the parties will have to become more inclusive and responsive in order to achieve greater accountability and consolidate multi-party democracy.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

On October 1, 2004, IRI began implementing this new cooperative agreement, as a continuation and expansion of activities carried out under previous CEPPS Leader Award, DGC-A-00-01-0004-00. (IRI will submit a separate final report for this previous project.)

As of end of this quarter, IRI has incurred cumulative total expenditures of \$89,697.77. These expenditures were incurred under the new agreement, by implementing activities outlined in the 12-month work plan delivered to USAID-Mexico in October 2004. Activities are described below by political party.

Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)

District Office & Constituent Outreach Initiative

During this quarter, IRI held its third and fourth “District Office & Constituent Outreach” trainings with the PAN party. During 2005 IRI will continue to offer this series of trainings to the PAN with the goal of eventually covering all of Mexico’s 32 states (some states will be grouped together to minimize cost). The training series is designed to help the PAN and its members of congress improve accountability to citizens at the local level through district office management and targeted communication strategies. The training presentation developed by IRI was originally based on the model used by the district offices of many U.S. members of Congress. Since elected officials in Mexico are barred from serving consecutive terms, IRI has modified the U.S. model to reflect a more party-based form of district office management and constituent outreach.

The third in IRI’s series of PAN District Office & Constituent Outreach trainings was held in Rosarito, Baja California, on January 26 and 27. PAN party members attending the event included three members of congress and 18 district office staffers from the states of Baja California and Sinaloa. The training presentation was given by the director of IRI’s regional office in Guatemala. Feedback from event participants was collected via evaluation forms.

The fourth in IRI’s series of PAN District Office & Constituent Outreach trainings was held February 23 in the Mexican national congress in Mexico City. Event attendees included USAID/Mexico Mission Director, Edward Kadunc; Congresswoman and Foreign Relations Committee Chairwoman, Adriana Gonzalez (PAN–State of Mexico); and Congresswoman Miriam Arabian (PAN–Puebla). Congresswoman Arabian chairs

the PAN's internal committee that oversees implementation of PAN District Office programs and was the key PAN party member responsible for promoting this initiative with IRI. Also attending were three other PAN deputies¹ and 23 staffers. All told, the staffers represented the offices of eight PAN deputies from the Federal District and the offices of 15 PAN deputies from the State of Mexico (NOTE: some staffers work for more than one deputy). Anonymous feedback from event participants was collected via evaluation forms.

Accion Juvenil (the PAN party's youth leader organization)

In the 2000 presidential election, it was the youth vote that significantly contributed to the victory of PAN presidential candidate, Vicente Fox. With this in mind, the PAN is making an early start toward the 2006 Presidential elections. Final plans were coordinated with the Accion Juvenil National Secretary for a series of five "Regional Meetings" to prepare a youth strategy for the 2006 elections. These five events are supported by the Social Outreach and Municipal Strengthening Committees of the PAN National Committee. Accion Juvenil has asked IRI to provide training on strategic communications, media relations and voter mobilization tactics. IRI agreed to provide these trainings and partially co-sponsor the five events. The five Regional Meetings will cover every one of Mexico's 31 states, and will bring together a competitively selected group of local youth leaders; each young leader is chosen on the basis of local leadership achievements. A total of about 500 youth will be trained via this initiative (see **Future Activities** below for more details).

PAN-U.S. Foundational Assembly Meeting in Chicago, IL

In January IRI program staff traveled to Chicago, IL, to attend the PAN party's foundational assembly meeting for its members living in the United States. The PAN's intention in forming this chapter is to provide an organizational network—with members and representatives in all 50 U.S. states—in anticipation of a new law allowing overseas voting in future Mexican political elections. PAN Party President, Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, was a keynote speaker at the event.

Partido Revolucionario Democratico (PRD)

No activities were conducted with the PRD this quarter. IRI continued discussions with PRD political advisors and other PRD party members on activities that could be scheduled in order to conduct work with the PRD next quarter. IRI has discussed a proposed work plan regarding training topics, pending election of new leaders at the PRD National Executive Committee.

Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)

Due to organizational changes at PRI-EDOMEX, IRI did not conduct any trainings with the PRI-EDOMEX this quarter. IRI did communicate frequently with representatives from this organization, however. Additionally, a high-level PRI-EDOMEX staffer

¹ Mexican House of Deputies equivalent to U.S. House of Representatives.

attended IRI's Regional Political Party Conference held February 17–20 in Lima, Peru (as detailed immediately below under **Multipartisan Initiatives**).

Multipartisan Initiatives

IRI Regional Political Party Conference in Lima, Peru, February 17–20

An official from the PAN National Executive Committee and a high-level PRI-EDOMEX staffer were featured speakers at IRI's Regional Political Party Conference held February 17–20 in Lima, Peru. Representatives from a diverse group of 14 political parties from Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua, along with eight Latin American and European experts on political party reform and renewal participated in the event. The conference was designed as an intensive two-day workshop on party renewal objectives and strategies for political parties that have been involved in IRI's Regional Project since it was launched in 2003. Themes included party challenges to internal democratization, grassroots participation, leadership development, transparency and accountability, and fundraising.

IRI did not conduct any LAC Regional Program activities in Mexico during this quarter.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As outlined in the proposal, IRI's main overall objectives are to strengthen the Mexican parties' ability to become more accountable to the citizenry and to deepen Mexican civil society's monitoring of the policy process. The results and accomplishments obtained this quarter for each of the five IRI objectives contained in the proposal are as follows:

1. Decentralize political party functions and decision-making.

Result 1: Core party leaders and party members comprehend the benefits of decentralization and support democratization strengthening initiatives.

IRI's 3rd and 4th District Office / Constituent Outreach trainings with the PAN were well-attended in both Baja California and at the National Congress in Mexico City. Responses on the anonymous evaluation forms collected after the events indicated that a majority of participants found the trainings interesting, and a majority were satisfied with the quality of the presentations and IRI's ability to adapt the U.S. model to Mexico's political reality. Deputy Myriam Arabian, a PAN member of congress representing the state of Puebla, attended the training at the National Congress in Mexico City (note: she also attended the pilot training in Puebla). Deputy Arabian informed IRI that she has implemented one of IRI's specific district office recommendations, i.e. to establish a panel of volunteer, expert community advisors to advise her and her district office staff on specific matters. Two chiefs of staff to PAN members of congress also participated, for the second time, at the Mexico City training. Both chiefs of staff told the first-time participants that the reason they were repeating the training was that they found the material to be valuable and interesting,

and they would like to deepen their knowledge of it in order to persuade the members for whom they work to begin implementing specific IRI district office and constituent outreach strategies. IRI assumes that the desire to attend future trainings indicates that participants perceive specific benefits associated with decentralization, which is a strong underlying tenet of the training material.

High-level PAN Party leaders and the PAN National Executive Committee's Office of Constituent Outreach in Mexico City are supportive of this initiative, as evidenced by their pro-active efforts to plan at least one training each month. This is an indicator that the PAN party supports democracy strengthening initiatives.

2. Encourage stronger two-way internal communications between national, state and local party structures.

Result 2: Two-way communication between party structures at national, state and local levels is better coordinated.

In selecting dates for the trainings, the PAN National Executive Committee's Office of Constituent Outreach in Mexico City worked hard to ensure that the dates for the trainings did not conflict with other activities, and that selected dates were conducive to high attendance rates by those to whom the training was targeted (this indicates stronger two-way communication in the sense that the national party structure did not impose dates or expectations upon the local and state-level structures, but rather coordinated with them to achieve maximum benefit and high attendance.) Furthermore, the two district office trainings this quarter were executed without any logistical delays or communication problems between the PAN in Mexico City and the local state office staff. This is a positive indicator in terms of decentralized and supportive decision-making between the central and state/local PAN party structures.

(See **Attachment A** for attendance rates of PAN members of congress and their staffers at all IRI district office trainings conducted to-date. Since only a very small number of PAN state-level legislators have attended the trainings, this data is not included in the attached table. Greater efforts may be needed to promote the training among members and staff of the state legislative bodies in order to increase such attendance rates, or alternatively, IRI may implement a subsequent district office initiative at the state level—see **VI. Future Activities: Multi-partisan Initiatives**).

3. Increase capacity to promote voter participation and input.

Result 3: Party platforms and communications are based on input from citizens and representatives of civil society, independent of campaign cycles.

One PAN member of congress, Deputy Miriam Arabian, has appointed non-paid citizen advisors, which is a recommendation included in IRI's District Office training. The objective of having citizen advisors is to improve access to the citizenry and improve the elected official's image of local accountability by representing local

leaders and experts in her district, as opposed to leaders and experts in Mexico City. IRI has not yet detected whether or not input from local citizen advisors have had any influence on PAN Party platform and/or party communications.

4. Improve technical party capacity.

Result 4: Parties utilize new knowledge, methods and technology effectively.

Establishing a panel of citizen advisors as described above indicates that a PAN member of congress is utilizing a new method for constituent outreach to improve party accountability to the citizenry via district office activities.

5. Improve dialogue, coordination and cooperation between parties.

Result 5: Dialogue, coordination and cooperation between the three major parties increases.

The co-participation of one PRI party member and one PAN member at IRI's Regional Conference in Peru provides baseline evidence of multi-partisan cooperation outside of Mexico. This single occurrence, however, does not provide for a full baseline assessment (i.e. further observation is needed).

V. EVALUATION

District Office and Constituent Outreach Initiative

IRI implements district office and constituent outreach trainings to provide motivation and strategic guidance for the advancement of democracy by teaching political parties how to better communicate with citizens. If parties communicate better with the citizenry, this should in turn empower citizens to hold their government more accountable.

IRI is pleased with its progress in successfully adapting the U.S. model for district office and constituent outreach to the Mexican political reality. The predominant criticism indicated on the anonymous evaluation forms collected at the pilot training in Puebla in June 2004 was that the US model lacked applicability—or at a minimum was only partially useful—for Mexican members of congress. Underlying this criticism is the fact that the U.S. model assumes that if an *elected incumbent* responds to constituents' needs, regardless of party, he or she will be re-elected, while the Mexican model assumes that if a *political party* responds to constituents' needs, the political party will improve its image and the party member becomes more likely to rise to a higher position within the party. The amount of financial support available to US members of congress versus Mexican members of congress is also vastly disproportionate.

To respond to the participants' critiques and make IRI's strategies applicable to Mexico's political reality, IRI made substantial content changes to its training materials and

presentation techniques. Since then, the anonymous evaluation forms collected after each training clearly confirm that these modifications have progressively improved participants' assessment of the applicability of IRI's district office and constituent outreach training. Achieving this required removing certain components and recommendations, emphasizing both party accountability and member accountability as important objectives, replacing examples and anecdotes from the U.S. with analogous Mexican ones², focusing on low-cost techniques and cost-saving measures, and proposing strategies based on level of *resourcefulness*, as opposed to level of *resources*. Nevertheless, some aspects of the US model remain useful as strategies for improving local accountability in Mexico (for example, giving district office staff greater autonomy in setting agendas and organizing events).

IRI has witnessed sustained PAN interest and participation in implementing this initiative throughout Mexico in order to cover all 31 states. Attendance has included elected members, not just staffers, and participants have shown a willingness to travel to neighboring states to attend the training.

As indicated in **Attachment A**, the trainings generally achieved between 50% and 80% coverage.³ The highest coverage so far has been at the training conducted in Mexico City (this is expected, since it is the most convenient location for PAN members of congress and their staff to attend).

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Partido Accion Nacional (PAN)

District Office / Constituent Outreach

The fifth, sixth and seventh District Office / Constituent Outreach trainings with the PAN are planned for the states of Aguascalientes (April 9), Veracruz (May 20–21) and Quintana Roo (May 26–28). The eighth such training will most likely be held in the month of June (exact date and location not yet available). IRI plans to continue conducting these trainings with the PAN through at least Summer 2005.

IRI has continuously updated and improved the district office workshop through participant feedback. To supplement this feedback, IRI is planning to arrange for PAN members of congress (who have participated in this workshop) to visit U.S. congressional district offices to see first-hand how this type of work is conducted in the United States. Next quarter IRI will attempt to conduct at least one of these visits.

² Instead of interjecting anecdotes related to US district offices, IRI trainers interact dynamically with participants to obtain Mexican anecdotes. These anecdotes provide a basis for discussion and are incorporated into the IRI trainer's repertoire for future trainings.

³ The low coverage of Veracruz members at the training in Baja California is an anomaly, since a future training is planned for that state and will be easier to attend for reasons of proximity.

Campaign Finance – Mexican model

IRI is organizing an electoral reform conference in Brazil at the end of May 2005. One of the main components of this reform is campaign finance. Brazil currently has a 100% privately funded form of campaign finance, and there is a proposal in the Brazilian legislature to switch to public funding of campaigns. At IRI's request, two Mexican members of congress have agreed to travel to Brazil to present the pros and cons of public financing, since that is the system currently in place in Mexico.

IRI believes that offering Mexican politicians the opportunity to participate regionally in Latin America (and potentially non-Western Hemisphere countries) augments their understanding of their own political reform initiatives, and provides them with tangible returns by affording them the opportunity to share their party's successes with democrats from neighboring countries. Participation in the Brazil conference will not be funded by this project (i.e. funds available via separate Brazil CEPPS grant).

Support for Acción Juvenil ("Youth Action")

IRI will continue working with *Acción Juvenil*, an organization within the PAN for young leaders. The PAN has planned to hold five "Regional Meetings" (see under **Program Activities** above) to develop the PAN's youth mobilization strategy for the 2006 presidential election. All five of these Regional Meetings will take place next quarter. The first will be held April 1–4 in Tecate, Baja California, followed by Nayarit (April 22–24), Tlaxcala (May 13–15), Coahuila (May 27–29) and Campeche (June 17–19). IRI staff will conduct trainings at these events on strategic communication, media training, and voter mobilization (i.e. Get-Out-the-Vote tactics). IRI has agreed to financially cover partial costs for these events on a "per-participant" basis; this strategy is aimed at achieving maximum event attendance and buy-in on the part of the youth leaders.

MOU with Fundacion Rafael Preciado

IRI was expecting to formalize its two-year old relationship with the PAN by signing an MOU on technical training with the PAN's research institute. This MOU was postponed in relation to the election of the new PAN party president. IRI will pursue signature of the MOU next quarter; the MOU will allow further collaboration between the PAN and IRI and will strengthen the organizations' mutual work commitment.

Partido Revolucionario Democratico (PRD)

No specific activities are currently scheduled with the PRD. IRI remains in communication with PRD party members and has discussed conducting specific activities with the PRD next quarter, including developing a plan to implement the District Office / Constituent Outreach trainings with PRD members of congress, and their staff. Though the PRD has expressed interest in this initiative, further discussions are on hold pending further internal organizational clarity on how this initiative will be implemented.

Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)

District Office / Constituent Outreach Trainings

The PRI has expressed interest in implementing the District Office / Constituent Outreach initiative with the PRI, but probably only at the state level. More discussions with state-level PRI officials are required before moving ahead with this initiative.

PRI State of Mexico / School of Candidates, Government Officials and Public Servants

IRI remains in communication with PRI officials in the State of Mexico to re-instate its training initiatives at the *School of Candidates, Government Officials and Public Servants*, located in the state capital of Toluca. IRI will keep the USAID/Mexico Mission informed of any activities that may arise with the PRI/EDOMEX next quarter.

Multipartisan Initiatives

CRS (Congressional Research Service) Exchange Visits

Objective and non-partisan research—through which legislators receive unbiased information on timely and relevant topics—is a necessary first step toward developing a true legislative body in Mexico, especially given the new multi-partisan political competitiveness that has emerged since the 2000 presidential election. IRI has proposed to work with the Mexican equivalent of the CRS to strengthen the Mexican Congress' own research capabilities. Like the district office program, IRI plans to work with CRS in Washington to adapt its structure of services to the Mexican system. A competitive selection for exchange visits for legislative staffers and key party members, and country visits by CRS staffers from the U.S., will be included as part of this activity, as person-to-person contact will be an effective way to initiate a sustained communication between CRS and their Mexican counterparts.

During this quarter, IRI staff in Washington, DC, met with one Analyst and one Specialist of the Latin America/Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of the Congressional Research Service to discuss IRI's proposed CRS Initiative. The CRS staffers agreed (pending internal approval) to begin working with IRI next quarter to implement the initiative. IRI will follow up by meeting with the Mexican congressional research entities⁴ in Mexico in order to develop a work plan and timeline for implementing the exchange visits. IRI expects the first exchange visit to take place in June/July 2005 (most likely, CRS staff will go to Mexico first).

EDOMEX State Legislature: District Office / Constituent Outreach Trainings

This quarter IRI met with local deputies in Toluca, State of Mexico, to discuss signing an MOU for technical assistance to assist the state legislature in working with its constituents. Specifically, the MOU would involve implementing IRI's District Office / Constituent Outreach initiative to members from all parties in the EDOMEX legislature. The majority speaker of the EDOMEX state legislature tentatively agreed to sign an

² Mexico does not have a single non-partisan entity responsible for conducting research for its Congress; rather there are several such entities that conduct research in specific fields, and oversight of these entities is assigned to members of the national congress on a partisan basis.

MOU with IRI to implement District Office / Constituent Outreach training, on a multi-partisan basis, for all members of the state congress. Signature of the MOU has been postponed, although both the PAN and the PRI have stated that they would like to sign this MOU prior to the EDOMEX gubernatorial election in July 2005. If the MOU is signed next quarter, IRI will seek to formalize a definitive work plan with the EDOMEX legislature, and submit such work plan to the USAID/Mexico Mission.

To ensure quality Q&A and open discussion, IRI will hold its district office trainings with only one party at a time; IRI's objective would be to cover each of the state's localities/districts for each of three major parties⁵. IRI specifically discussed an initial event in Valle Bravo with only the PRI deputies (24). The event was to be potentially inaugurated by Governor Montiel and/or the PRI pre-candidate Enrique Peña.

⁵ Members of the smaller Mexican parties (e.g. PT, Convergencia, PVEM) may be invited to attend, if requested by the PAN, PRD or PRI.

Attachment A: “Coverage” of PAN District Office Training Initiative

State attending training	Location of training	# of PAN deputies in that state	# of PAN deputies represented at training (incl. deputies and/or their staff)	“Coverage” (as a % of total PAN deputies)
Puebla	Puebla	6	3	50%
Querétaro	Querétaro	4	2	50%
Baja California	Rosarito, BC	8	4	50%
Sinaloa	Rosarito, BC	3	1	33%
Sonora	Rosarito, BC	5	4	80%
Veracruz	Rosarito, BC	13	1	8%
Mexico	Congreso, DF	19	15	79%
Distrito Federal	Congreso, DF	9	8	89%